

LUTON BEAT WATFORD.

TWO EARLY GOALS DECIDE TOWN ISSUE.

By Crusader.

WATFORD'S decline seems to have depressed their supporters so much that there was nothing like the following expected when they visited LUTON TOWN on Saturday. Apart from the early stages, one missed much of the lively humour that has always been associated with games between the teams, whether at Watford or at Luton. When the Town went to Vicarage-road in September it was estimated that at the least 5,000 spectators followed them, but there could not have been 500 from Watford on Saturday. It was not good for the Watford team, and was much worse for the Town Club, who had expected a crowd of at least 12,000. The attendance did not reach the five-figure mark.

Possibly the early successes of Luton, which won the match, damped the ardour of the visiting followers, and they must have been glad to escape with a comparatively light defeat, considering the run of the play. Luton rightly took the spoils on the run of the game, and had they persisted in the tactics employed in the early stages, when they almost ran the Watford defenders off their feet, they would have had a much greater margin. In the second half, however, they dropped the cut and thrust attack and often daddled and diddled, and this in exasperating fashion to the spectators, but to the satisfaction of Watford halves and backs, who got a better grip of the game in consequence.

Watford opened well, but were quickly put on the defensive, and after several assaults had been checked or frustrated, BIRCH had the satisfaction of scoring his first goal for the Town first eleven with a shot that gave Turner no chance to save, being right away from him. Practically every forward had a part in the preliminary work, the ball moving from right to left, and back again to the centre, and Yardley's bustle made the way clear for Birch at the last. The visitors relied very much on their wingers, who were speedy, but the best effort came through McBain, who pushed the ball forward for McPherson to make a grand sally between the backs, only to fire wide with Banes alone in front of him.

Then the Town pressed strenuously, and twenty minutes had elapsed when another movement, this time initiated on the right, and carried on by the left, brought a scramble in the Watford goal area, and YARDLEY had the pleasure of heading the ball past Turner to complete the scoring. It was the reward of opportunism, and being in the right spot at the right time, but Yardley had shown so much ginger that he deserved the privilege of scoring the goal that completed the actual result. More goals would have come had the other Town inside forwards shown the mettle of their leader when they reached close quarters.

Watford, apart from McPherson, were not often dangerous, but the centre-forward gave Banes one anxious moment when a header required tipping out from under the bar. Otherwise, however, they were disposed to hang on to the ball too long, and Richards and Smith covered each other so well, and their halves had the knack of turning up in the right place when the backs were beaten, so that the interval arrived with the Town enjoying a winning lead.

LUTON 2
WATFORD nil

The second half was not nearly so interesting as the first. Watford relied a great deal on the offside theory, and the Town forwards fell into the trap time after time. The result was that the visitors held play in the Town half for a considerable

time, and Banes and his backs had much more to do. Their forwards, however, lacked the essential thrust and marksmanship, and Banes had nothing of a very difficult nature to deal with. For a while it seemed as if the Town players had lost their stamina, and had given of their best in the first period to the detriment of the second.

They woke up, however, and came much nearer scoring than Watford had ever been. Turner's work, however, was not a great deal more thrilling than that of Banes', and he was usually in the right place. The nearest efforts to success were made by Fraser and Clark when the game was very near the end. The left-half made a wonderful run from near the half-way line, passing opponent after opponent, and from an acute angle shot hard at goal, but the ball struck Turner and was diverted behind. From the flag-kick, Clark headed past Turner's outstretched arms, but the ball hit the bar and came out for the goalkeeper to retrieve and clear. Boylen also missed a good chance about this time, shooting past with only Turner to beat—an opening he would make good five times out of six.

It was a win that would do much to restore the confidence of the Town followers, and encourage them for the more severe struggle that awaits them on Saturday. The team work was good, and every man played his hardest. Banes had not a very busy time, for his backs played strongly, and both gave of their best, the kicking being usually crisp and clean, and the tackling swift and decisive. Fraser was not merely the best half, but the best player on view, and Clark and Fulton played well enough to retain their places on this form.

Had the forwards maintained their swinging football of the first half-hour they also would have lessened any danger of being dropped. Yardley led them with his customary forcefulness, and was always on the premises when there was a chance of a goal but he had few opportunities of shooting. Drinnan was brainy, and some of his passes superb, but he hung back a lot in the second half, and Birch seemed inclined to follow suit. The latter, however, played a capital game for so young a player, and it was good to see him open his individual account. Boylen was not at his best, but worked hard, and McInnes, after showing that he could do work as good as that of any forward on view, fell away. He got a severe rap in the first half and that may have affected his quality.

For the visitors, Turner showed plenty of confidence and skill, and could not be blamed for either goal. Brown and Davison played stubbornly, and never gave up hope. Their cleverness in working the offside theory upset the crowd a bit, but it was a good plan, for the Watford halves did not reveal superabundance of stamina. Warner was the pick. The forwards were good enough individually to get much better results, but were lacking in combination and in thrustfulness. The game was played in good spirit, and was as enjoyable as any seen on the ground this season.

LUTON TOWN 2
WATFORD 0

LUTON.—Banes; Richards, Smith; Fulton, Clark, Fraser; Boylen, Birch, Yardley, Drinnan, McInnes.

WATFORD. — Turner; Brown, Davison; Warner, McBain, Woodward; Chapman, Barnett, McPherson, Wooliscroft, Daniels.

Referee:—Mr A. G. Price, London.